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ART. VIII.—*The Slave Power: its Character, Career, and Probable Designs. Being an Attempt to explain the Real Issues involved in the American Contest.* By J. E. CAIRNES, M. A., Professor of Jurisprudence and Political Economy in Queen's College, Galway, and late Whately Professor of Political Economy in the University of Dublin. New York. 1862.

IN the work before us, Professor Cairnes, by presenting to the English public the question at issue in a clearer and truer light, has done our country, in its efforts to suppress a gigantic rebellion, a real service. And so far as the public sentiment of England, especially amongst her ruling classes, has been partially and erroneously formed,—from whatsoever cause, whether of ignorance of the structure of our social system, or of the factions and interests which have combined to precipitate upon the country the present civil war,—he has done her an equal service in correcting that sentiment. If, however, it springs not from ignorance, but from a perverse determination to misrepresent our country, the work will fail of accomplishing all an impartial mind could wish; and yet its influence in moulding English opinion, even at this late day, must be very great. For, as we shall see, it holds up to view the Slave Power in a light which, to England, must be anything but agreeable, and which must make her pause before interfering in behalf of the Confederate States.* She can never so far forget the sentiments of Wilberforce and of Sir Fowell Buxton, and the work which they accomplished, as to become the champion of human bondage. If, as a general thing in British policy, self-interest is the controlling principle of action, we have confidence to believe, nevertheless, that her repugnance to chattel slavery rises high above this; and that, however prominently in the nation, as in the individual, love of material prosperity may be developed, rarely are moral ideas

* This point is well put by "Historicus," in the London Times: "To my mind, in the one word 'slavery' is comprehended a perpetual bar to the notion of English mediation as between the North and the South,—a bar to amicable mediation, because it would be futile; to forcible intervention, because it would be immoral."

and good character openly sacrificed for a temporal advantage never so paramount.

Professor Cairnes addresses himself to his work in an earnest yet temperate spirit, and with more impartiality and candor than is usual on so delicate a theme. Slavery, as developed in our country, he discusses with philosophic completeness, tracing it in its economic, social, political, and moral bearings, and aiming to elucidate a question of vast interest to mankind. Few readers will fail to admit his general fairness; and in our own country, where great difference of opinion prevails, and where whatever may be said is looked upon either as partisan defence or antislavery denunciation, the work will be thankfully accepted as a judicious and truthful view of the case. Those who agree with the author will feel confirmed in the strength of their position, and such as may take issue on the whole or part of the ground gone over, will find that they have something more than inflammatory declamation to refute. The facts are compactly grouped, the reasoning clearly conducted, and the conclusions unavoidable. Professor Cairnes does not conceal his hostility to slavery on moral grounds, but it is such as the best minds in all lands feel, and it surely cannot vitiate his positions so far as they rest on facts. If he labors under the disadvantage of being a foreigner, and therefore may be less familiar with the history and movements of public affairs,—so far at least as these must be felt by close contact with them,—a double compensation will be found, first, in the fact that he *is* a foreigner, and therefore not entangled in the politics of the country, which so far forth might militate against his testimony, and, secondly, in that his is the work of a scholar in his quiet retreat, where, out of the range of disturbing causes, he has wrought his material and studies into compact form. His, then, is the testimony of an impartial philosopher on a question viewed wholly in the light of its facts. We doubt not the work will receive a welcome and candid hearing on this side the water, as due to one who has so ably, and so judiciously, and so kindly too, stated our cause to a British public.

Professor Cairnes discusses his subject under the following general heads: The Causes of the War, The Economic Basis

of Slavery, Internal Organization of Slave Society, Tendencies of Slave Society, Internal Development of Slave Society, External Policy of Slave Society, The Career of the Slave Power, Designs of the Slave Power, and General Conclusions. After first clearing the ground of some pretexts for the rebellion, which were put forward for English ears and in reality to hide the covert aim of the Slave Power, the author gives what he considers the real cause of secession, showing that it is not an "isolated phenomenon," but had its origin deep in the heart of American politics, of which slavery was the grand problem, and is a result feared in the earlier history of the republic by some of her greatest statesmen.

"The real and sufficient cause of the present position of affairs in North America appears to the writer to lie in the character of the Slave Power, — that system of interests, industrial, social, and political, which has for the greater part of half a century directed the career of the American Union, and which now, embodied in the Southern Confederation, seeks admission as an equal member into the community of civilized nations. In the following pages an attempt will be made to resolve this system into its component elements, to trace the connection of the several parts with each other, and of the whole with the foundation on which it rests, and to estimate generally the prospects which it holds out to the people who compose it, as well as the influence it is likely to exercise on the interests of other nations; and if I do not greatly mistake the purport of the considerations which shall be adduced, their effect will be to show that this Slave Power constitutes the most formidable antagonist to civilized progress which has appeared for many centuries, representing a system of society at once retrograde and aggressive, — a system which, containing within it no germs from which improvement can spring, gravitates inevitably towards barbarism, while it is impelled, by exigencies inherent in its position and circumstances, to a constant extension of its territorial domain." — pp. 25, 26.

In this country public opinion has been much divided as to the cause of the present rebellion. It is largely controlled, we think, by political bias and association. It is affirmed with great positiveness that slavery is the cause of the war, and with equal positiveness denied. As a matter of majority, *that* seems to be in favor of the former position, which also is the growing opinion of the leading minds of the nation. To this view of the subject, too, nearly all the most decided Union

men of the Border States have given their adhesion, as well as such men as Robert J. Walker of Mississippi and Colonel Hamilton of Texas. These witnesses are valuable mainly as knowing more accurately the secret influence of the Slave Power, and the *nexus* which binds it together, and as therefore likely to understand better the actual origin of the rebellion. Still, majorities are nothing in determining the question at issue, unless we can see adequate reasons which secured such a verdict. As between the disputants, however, the former have undoubtedly the truth on their side, though the proposition that slavery is the cause of the rebellion is not free from ambiguity, while the latter are guilty of confounding things which ought to be kept separate. When it is said that slavery is the cause of the rebellion, we understand it to be so in this sense: that the Slave Power is such a social, political, economic organization, with such a spirit inherent in it, that, if checked in its aims and demands, it will smite the power which seeks to govern it; * — just as we say a sinful moral agent is such a being, that, when the law of God would check him in a rebellious career against the Ruler of the universe, he would, if possible, overthrow the very throne of God himself. Slavery, however, is not the cause of the rebellion in the sense that it inevitably leads to rebellion, or else we should see that to be the invariable sequence wherever it exists. They do not stand necessarily related to each other as gravitation and matter do, so that the latter, if freely subjected to the influence of the former, must gravitate unavoidably. In moral questions, too, the cause and effect, though united by an inflexible law of sequence, cannot be so accurately and so simply stated. But slavery in a free government, legally under the control of the government as respects its expansion, may, when such control is exercised, become the substantial cause of rebellion, by asserting the right to expansion. In this case

* It is assumed that any control by the government over the subject of slavery will be just and within constitutional limits. We are aware that there are those who deny to Congress any right to legislate with reference to slavery in the Territories; but we are not bound to consider the policy which has been inaugurated within the past eight or ten years, opposed to that of the government in former years, as the correct one in regard to law or constitutional power.

it becomes the aggressor, and therefore the cause of any collision which may spring from it. When, therefore, slavery is assigned as the cause of the rebellion, it must be in this qualified sense, — that its history, aims, and spirit in this country have been such as to constitute it the cause of our present troubles.

Those who deny that slavery is the cause of the rebellion fail to distinguish between a thing as in itself inevitably the cause, and the same thing in certain relations as the cause. For example, the existence of man is not the cause of the evils which flow from his conduct; but it is just to affirm that the existence of man as a depraved being is the cause of such evils. Hence, it is said, we may begin anywhere, and the argument is equally valid. If slavery is the cause of the rebellion, then the existence of the African is the cause of slavery, and so on. Here are two fallacies; — first, that of confounding antecedent with cause; and, secondly, that of assuming that the existence of a race in a cruel bondage, which ultimately rests on unmitigated wrong, is as legitimate a state of existence as that of the race itself. This position is absolutely blasphemous. Needs it an argument to show that the existence of a race of people from the hand of God is a different thing from their existence in a state which the cupidity and the depravity of man have created for it? Is it possible that any one can soberly assert, that the causal connection between the slave power and the rebellion is no closer than that between the free African, and his condition as a slave? Is it not a law of morals, that wrong uninterrupted stands in immediate causal juxtaposition with other wrong? Is there anything in the nature of a free African, that places him inherently in a servile state? And is there not something in the nature and spirit of a power, whose very corner-stone is the subjugation of an inferior race to perpetual bondage, that holds in solution some undeveloped evil, if occasion offers? But why pursue a question which ought to be plain to every mind capable of fair and consistent reasoning? We will, therefore, only add, by way of confirming our position, the opinion of one who, as to the cause of the rebellion, is in every way competent to judge. “Slavery,” says Mr. Stephens, Vice-President of the Southern

Confederacy, in his celebrated Atlanta speech, — “Slavery was the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution.” Mr. Stephens, who is thoroughly informed in reference to the issue between the North and the South, and who is as well acquainted with the institution of slavery as any man in the country, does not wriggle in stating the cause of the rebellion. He understands the logic of the case, and is not afraid to put it. If the South does not know what the moving spring of this rupture was, then it were idle to ask who does. Thus, distasteful as Professor Cairnes’s statement of the cause of the rebellion may be to some on this side of the Atlantic, it is not only a philosophic one, well sustained by a view of the whole subject, but also corroborated by witnesses who are now the “head and front” of the rebellion.

In order to know how the Slave Power could produce an effect so stupendous as the present rebellion, we must seek an intimate knowledge of its real character. In the work under review, this is accomplished with thoroughness, and we believe in the main with truth. It is not a tirade against the cruelties and the barbarisms of American slavery, — for of these scarcely mention is made ; but an investigation of its laws and principles of life, its influence on society and manners, its relation to industry and commerce, to education, mechanism, politics, law, and progress. Slavery, as a social and political element in our country, is governed primarily by its economic basis, and must, therefore, be regarded first as an industrial system.

“The political tendencies of the Slave Power, as will hereafter be seen, are determined in a principal degree by the economic necessities under which it is placed by its fundamental institution ; and in order, therefore, to appreciate the nature of those tendencies, a determination of the conditions requisite for the success of slavery, as an industrial system, becomes indispensable.” — p. 33.

Slavery, once a common feature in all the American Colonies, soon died out in those north of the Delaware, while in the Colonies south of that estuary it became permanent as an industrial system, and has been the great moulding power, socially and politically, in the Southern States, commanding obedience to its necessities. The cause of this difference in

the fortunes of slavery North and South has been sought in various circumstances. Difference in the character and social habits of the settlers has been assigned as the reason why slave labor in the North has given way to free labor, and at the same time has become firmly rooted in the Southern States. Labor to the Northern colonists was the natural condition of life; not so of the aristocratic emigrants who went to Virginia and the Carolinas. It is said, also, that the climate of the South is too severe for white labor. This is not sustained by facts, either as regards European countries in the same latitudes as those of the Southern States, or as regards the Southern States themselves. It is not true of Texas, where free German colonists perform all the labor of cultivating the staple crops of the South; and in the larger cities white labor on the wharves and the levees is almost exclusively employed. So, too, negro indolence is considered a reason why slavery exists at the South. This, if true to the facts as developed in the West India emancipation, would be a reason why the present negro population should be compelled to a state of subordination, so as to make them producers as well as consumers, but can furnish no reason why the South should seek to extend the institution over vast unsettled territories. The effect should be to restrict its limits, and thus to diminish proportionally this indolent population. For it certainly will not be claimed that the South now, or at any time, needed expansion in order to employ a present slave population. She has sought expansion of territory for the double purpose, first, of increasing her slave population, and, secondly, from this as a base, of augmenting her political influence in the government.

But the true cause of this difference in the increase and diminution of slavery North and South must be sought in the peculiar advantages and disadvantages which slave and free labor possess as systems of industry in the United States. It has been subject, as we shall see, entirely to economic laws. The advantages and disadvantages of slavery are stated by Professor Cairnes in the following language.

“The economic advantages of slavery are easily stated: they are all comprised in the fact, that the employer of slaves has absolute power over his workmen, and enjoys the disposal of the whole fruit of their

labors. Slave labor, therefore, admits of the most complete organization; that is to say, it may be combined on an extensive scale, and directed by a controlling mind to a single end, and its cost can never rise above that which is necessary to maintain the slave in health and strength.

"On the other hand, the economical defects of slave labor are very serious. They may be summed up under the three following heads: it is given reluctantly; it is unskilful; it is wanting in versatility.

"It is given reluctantly, and consequently the industry of the slave can only be depended on so long as he is watched. The moment the master's eye is withdrawn, the slave relaxes his efforts. The cost of slave labor will, therefore, in great measure, depend on the degree in which the work to be performed admits of the workmen being employed in close proximity to each other. If the work be such that a large gang can be employed with efficiency within a small space, and be thus brought under the eye of a single overseer, the expense of superintendence will be slight; if, on the other hand, the nature of the work requires that the workmen should be dispersed over an extended area, the number of overseers, and therefore the cost of the labor which requires this supervision, will be proportionately increased. The cost of slave labor thus varies directly with the degree in which the work to be done requires dispersion of the laborers, and inversely as it admits of their concentration.

"Secondly, slave labor is unskilful, and this, not only because the slave, having no interest in his work, has no inducement to exert his higher faculties, but because, from the ignorance to which he is of necessity condemned, he is incapable of doing so. In the Slave States of North America the education of slaves, even in the most rudimentary form, is proscribed by law, and consequently their intelligence is kept uniformly and constantly at the very lowest point. He cannot be made to co-operate with machinery; he can only be trusted with the coarsest implements; he is incapable of all but the rudest forms of labor.

"But, further, slave labor is eminently defective in point of versatility. The difficulty of teaching the slave anything is so great, that the only chance of turning his labor to profit is, when he has once learned a lesson, to keep him to that lesson for life. Where slaves, therefore, are employed, there can be no variety of production. This peculiarity of slave labor, as we shall see, involves some very important consequences." — pp. 38–40.

The labor, as thus described, came into direct competition

with free labor, as existing in the North American Colonies. Professor Cairnes shows that, among peasant proprietors, no such organization as takes place in slave labor is possible to any great extent, because each one works on his own account, and without reference to the plans and labors of his neighbor. He is the owner of his lands and his toil, and therefore reaps the fruits of his efforts. Neither is the free-labor system of the North capable economically of distribution, as is the case with the slave-labor system of the South, where the staples are such that all the members of a slave family can be profitably employed, as in the raising of tobacco, in which the women and children perform all kinds of labor, and an amount that adult males could hardly exceed. What now is performed by these two classes of laborers under a slave system cannot be accomplished in a free-labor community; for both of these factors are otherwise engaged, — the first in domestic duties, the other for a time, at least, in attending school.

This difference in the two kinds of labor must be viewed in connection with another fact, namely, that the line which divides the Northern States from the Southern marks also in the main the boundary between different classes of crops. North of that line the soil and climate are best suited for grains, whilst south of it the staple products are cotton, tobacco, sugar, and rice. For the cultivation of these latter in the most successful way, we need a larger number of laborers on a given territory than for the cultivation of the former on the same territory; for one person can efficiently conduct the labor for twenty acres of grain, whilst the same number of acres in Southern crops would require at least eight or ten. This combination reduces the expense of slave labor, first, in overseers, and secondly, because the slave, being reluctant, can thus be kept at work. The inference then is, that slave labor, which can be successfully organized, is well adapted to the productions of the Southern States, but quite the reverse for those of the Northern sections of our country, because for these combination is not required, and slave labor here would be too expensive. In this, then, is found the reason why slavery in the South has become so firmly rooted, whilst at the North it easily yielded to other forms of industry. We see,

also, that, in those portions of the South which are suited for Northern crops, as in the higher lands of Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Georgia, slavery has failed to be the exclusive form of labor.

As combination compensates for the reluctance with which slave labor is performed, so Professor Cairnes points out, also, that its unskilfulness needs the advantage of a fertile soil, in order to make it profitable. Where the soil is thin and light, it is, under a free-labor system, subjected to skilful and elaborate modes of cultivation ; but this is scarcely possible, at least to any marked extent, in slave labor, where the implements of culture are of the rudest and most clumsy character. And to meet still another disadvantage of slave labor, — its want of versatility, — we need an unlimited extent of fertile soil, on which it can be employed as the older lands become exhausted. The ignorance of the laborers precludes the adaptation of crops to the new demands of worn-out soil, because, if a slave is educated to the cultivation of tobacco or rice, to this he must be kept for life, in order that his labor may be profitable. The result is, that, as lands become exhausted, they are exchanged for new soil, and the same process of exhaustion is repeated. The economic laws of slavery, then, are these : first, that it shall be employed in the production of crops, in which combined and organized labor is possible ; and, secondly, that it shall be unrestrained in the occupation of new and fertile lands as fast as the old become effete. These conditions will show why slavery exists in the South, and not in the North.

These positions are well taken, if we observe a few facts affecting the whole question. Slave labor must be concentrated, in order to be economical ; for the negro has every motive to do as little as possible. In a free-labor system labor is dispersion, for the obvious reason that the laborer is not owned by another. Now free labor has nothing to gain by combination. For example, ten farmers in the North, owning each a hundred acres of land, could accomplish for themselves as much, and as economically, if each took care of his own farm, as if they should combine them into one, and at the same time organize their labor into one effort. It would require for its

cultivation the same time, the same labor, the same outlay, in the one case as in the other. But these same thousand acres, under slave cultivation for the proprietor, cannot be wrought so economically, because the crops peculiar to the North, as a general thing, do not admit of combination of effort; and therefore the negro, in order that he shall do as much labor as a freeholder of the North, must be kept under strict oversight, and this would, for example, in the case of grain culture, require several persons in the capacity of overseers. But we may invert the case. A thousand acres at the South under slave labor, and directed to Southern products, can be conducted more economically than the same number of acres could be if cultivated by free labor. Here, again, we may take the whole number of acres in a mass, or divide it into ten or twenty equal parts. Under the first condition, the proprietor must be at greater expense in the employment of free labor than if he employed slave labor, because the wants of the former are greater, from the fact that he occupies a higher level in civilization. The free laborer's wife would hardly toil side by side with her husband in the cotton or rice fields, and, as essential to a free population in a country like ours, his children demand of him the privilege of a common-school education. Under the second condition, the same is true. The owner of fifty or a hundred acres of land either does his own work, and in that case the expense of his family must be deducted from his earnings, or he employs free hired labor, and then this condition is the same as in the first case. It ought not to be inferred that slave labor in the South is, therefore, most advantageous for the creation of wealth. It is cheaper under certain circumstances; but the existence of free labor, as we have seen, creates greater demands, and therefore develops industry in other directions, where skill and knowledge are required, and therefore corresponding remuneration.* Hence slave labor is unsuited to manufactures and commerce. Under the one system wealth is concentrated; under the other, distributed.

From the fact that slave labor admits of organization, — and this is its single merit, — and must be conducted on a large

* "Facts show that free labor is more productive of wealth than slave labor." — Robert J. Walker in the *Continental Monthly*.

scale in order to the greatest profit, Professor Cairnes traces its connection with and relation to large capital. This, however, does not exist in the South or in slave-labor communities, and therefore is sought elsewhere on the credit of the coming crop. What is the result of this economic law? That the large proprietories become larger, absorbing the smaller ones, so that wealth is massed with a few persons. "Our wealthy planters," says Mr. Clay, "are buying out their poorer neighbors, extending their plantations, and adding to their slave force. The wealthy few, who are able to live on smaller profits, and to give their blasted fields some rest, are thus pushing off the many who are merely independent." But the slave labor is confined to the best lands. These, therefore, are constantly growing less, whilst the waste tracts are ever enlarging. What will become of these? Will they, while slavery exists in any strength, be cultivated by a free-labor population? "This," as Professor Cairnes says, "is a moral impossibility," because of the exclusiveness of the system. These two kinds of labor will not blend on the same territory. The free laborer refuses to settle in a country where all that is degrading is associated with his occupation. The result is, that the thrift we see in the North, in all departments of industry, is not found in the South;* for that large class of people known as "white trash," or "crackers," does not, as in the North, form regular habits of industry, but is an idle, shiftless, vagrant community, too proud to work, because that would place them on a level with the slaves; and thus is lost to that section of the country so much productive energy. Why, for example, is Virginia, with all her natural advantages, less populous and wealthy than New York or Pennsylvania? It is because, first, the labor is, in the main, confined to slaves; secondly, this is best adapted to agricultural pursuits, on the two conditions of good soil, and plenty of it; and therefore, thirdly, her inferior class of lands, which in Pennsylvania and New York are made remunerative under a peasant proprietorship, yield her no material strength, because not wrought by her poor white population to any great

* Democracy in America, Vol. II. p. 222.

extent. In New York and Pennsylvania, almost the whole population is productive, either in agricultural pursuits or in manufacturing industry.

The impression which is left by Professor Cairnes's work, as respects the poor white population of the South, we think needs some qualification. They are indeed an ignorant, restless, vagrant class, and add almost nothing to the material prosperity of the country; but to say that they are "little removed from savage life, eking out a wretched subsistence by hunting, by fishing, by hiring themselves out for occasional jobs, by plundering," is to place them on a level with the wandering tribes of Central Asia, with habits as nomadic, as lawless, and as little responsible to government as theirs. We must never forget that these poor whites are in a civilized land, and under the same laws which govern the better and ruling classes of the South, and therefore cannot be so far removed from civilized life as Professor Cairnes's statement would seem to imply. That they are idle in a degree which we do not see the same classes at the North, is owing entirely to the system of labor which the South employs; that they are ignorant as no class of persons is at the North, is manifest from the great numbers of white adults who cannot read nor write; and that they are degraded in their social habits and manners, is apparent from the very term with which they are designated by the slaves, — "white trash." They are the necessary result of the system, social and industrial, under which they live. "The planters complain of these people for their idleness, for corrupting their slaves, for their thievish propensities; but they cannot dispense with them; for, in truth, they perform an indispensable function in the economy of slave societies, of which they are at once the victims and the principal supports."

Now, with wealth chiefly in the hands of a few; with labor confined to a distinct class, and regarded as disreputable for any other; with a population — more than half of the whole population of the South — "which lives dispersed over vast plains," — where, in a free government like ours, will the political power of such a community reside? We might infer from its constitution, did we not know as a matter of fact, that

it would be in the hands of the rich proprietors. They are its representatives. They shape its political action. Opposition to them, therefore, is incapable of being organized.

“The polity of such a society must thus, in essence, be an oligarchy, whatever be the particular mould in which it is cast. . . . A society so organized tends to develop with peculiar intensity the distinctive vices of an oligarchy. In a country of free labor, . . . the pursuits of industry are various. Various interests, therefore, take root, and parties grow up, which . . . become centres of opposition. . . . It is not so in the Slave States. That variety of interest which springs from the individual impulses of a free population does not here exist. The elements of political opposition are wanting. There is but one party . . . who are capable of acting together in political concert. The rest is an undisciplined rabble. From this state of things the only possible result is that which we find, — a despotism in the last degree unscrupulous and impatient of control, wielded by the wealthy few.”

As this oligarchy holds sway in its own section of the country, so it has happened that, in alliance with an element in the North, it has ruled also in the councils of the nation, and in the main controlled its foreign and domestic policy. Professor Cairnes argues that the peculiar vices and defects of American character are not wholly, nor in any great degree, owing to democratic institutions, but to the fact that these institutions have been directed by the worst kind of despotic power. This it is that has organized out of its vagrant population filibustering expeditions against Central America, against Cuba, and at an earlier period against Texas. This it is that invades a feeble neighbor with a powerful army, in order to wrest from her immense domains over which to spread the peculiar institution, and to augment its power in the nation.

In a system so organized socially and politically, is there anything which can furnish a reasonable hope for improvement? Is slave society tending toward a higher or a lower civilization? Professor Cairnes feels the full weight of this question, and he has brought to its discussion a breadth of view and a wise discrimination, which make this part of the work one of singular value. Slavery is not a new fact in the world. On the contrary, it existed in all the nations of antiquity, as well as in mediæval and more modern states, — among

the Hebrews, the Greeks, and the Romans, in France, in Spain, in England ; and therefore, if progress in the arts and sciences, in civilization and culture, was not appreciably hindered, both in ancient and mediæval times, by the pressure of a slave population, why may we not expect the same process of improvement and advance in the Slave States of the South? The answer must be simple and easy, if we could predicate of the system in our country the same conditions that it had in antiquity, or in the states of modern or mediæval Europe ; or if we could suppose the same elements at work here that wrought in those communities for the improvement of the servile population. But “ between slavery as existing in classical and mediæval times, and the system which now erects itself defiantly in North America, there exist the most deep-reaching distinctions,” so that all analogy must be abandoned.

Professor Cairnes notices three distinctions. First, the difference of race and color between the slave and his master in the system as it is found in this country. This was unknown among the ancients. Nothing separated the master and his servant except the fact of freedom ; but in modern servitude the slave carries with him, even after liberation, the brand of his former condition. He can never be incorporated as a free citizen among his fellow-men, and thus lose the traces of a former degraded *status*. In ancient times, however, this was both possible and common. Again, the development of internal commerce has created a difference between ancient and modern slavery. Commerce did not exist to any great extent two thousand years ago, and therefore each nation was compelled to be the producer of its own articles of consumption ; and as far as the tastes and refinement of a people demanded luxuries and the comforts in keeping with a higher form of civilization, skill and intelligence were needed for their production. Consequently, the owners of slaves were led to educate them so as to make them skilful artisans. In Rome the education of slaves was never prohibited, and Gibbon tells us, “ that youths of promising genius were instructed in the arts and sciences, and almost every profession, liberal and mechanical, might be found in the household of an opulent Senator.” We might easily infer what would be the effect of

such a course as regards emancipation. But how is it in modern slavery? In our own country education is strictly denied to the slave. No necessity clamors that he should be skilful and intelligent, because without these qualities he can be employed in the production of a commodity which is in great demand in the markets of the world, and therefore furnishes the means of easy exchange for the comforts and luxuries of civilized life. All motives, therefore, combine, in order to a more facile control of the servile population, to keep the slave's mind closed to even the dawn of knowledge. We have, then, this singular fact, that, by whatever ratio civilization advances, by the same ratio inversely the condition of the slave becomes worse. A third difference between the ancient and the modern slave systems will be found in the "place which the slave-trade fills in the organization of modern slavery." Of this Professor Cairnes says:—

"Trading in slaves was doubtless practised by the ancients, and with sufficient barbarity. But we look in vain in the records of antiquity for a traffic which, in extent, in systematic character, and, above all, in the function discharged by it as the common support of countries breeding and consuming human labor, can with justice be regarded as the analogue of the modern slave-trade,—of that organized system which has been carried on between Guinea and the coast of America, or of that between Virginia, the Guinea of the New World, and the slave-consuming States of the South and West.

"But my object at present is to direct attention, not so much to the barbarous inhumanity of the slave-trade, whether foreign or domestic, as to what has not been so often noticed,—the mode in which it operates in giving increased coherence and stability to the system of which it is a part. Now it does this in two ways: first, by bringing the resources of salubrious countries to supplement the waste of human life in torrid regions; and, secondly, by providing a new source of profit for slave-holders, which enables them to keep up the institution, when, in the absence of this resource, it would become unprofitable and disappear."—pp. 71, 72.

Professor Cairnes then shows how in the Gulf States the consumption of life, if the slave is put to hard work, must be very great. If the supply of labor depend upon the natural increase of slave population in that locality, the increase will be quite inadequate without greater care in the preserva-

tion of life, and this will essentially modify the severity of the system. So, too, without a foreign or domestic slave-traffic, the natural tendency would be to a diminution of the rigidity of slavery. While the foreign slave-trade was allowed to exist, that was the chief source of replenishing the waste of life in the latitudes of the South unfavorable to health and longevity; but when it was no longer permitted, resort was had to the home-traffic. Now, it so happened in the fortunes of the slave system in the Northern Slave States, where, as in Virginia, after first exhausting her rich soils, it was slowly passing away from the encroachments of free labor, and must have eventually died out, that the prohibition of the African slave-traffic was enacted, and thus was created a demand for the surplus slave population not needed for agricultural purposes in those States. The consumption of life, therefore, in the far South has given stability and strength to the waning fortunes of slavery in Virginia and Kentucky, and in an equal degree to the expanding slave dominion in the Southwest, so that the increase in the price of slaves advanced fully a hundred per centum, and consequently the increase of numbers has kept pace. Thus, then, between the Northern and the Southern Slave States is created a reciprocal advantage: the one finding a market for its surplus slave population; the other having a large area suited for rapid and healthful breeding, from which to replenish the fearful waste of life occasioned by exhausting toil in an oppressive climate.

“Thus, as the domain of slavery is extended, its organization becomes more complete, and the fate of the slave population more harsh and hopeless. Slavery in its simple and primitive form is developed into slavery supported by a slave-trade,—into slavery expansive, aggressive, destructive of human life, regardless of human ties,—into slavery in its most dangerous and atrocious form; and the condition of facts which it discloses goes far, as it seems to me, to establish the conclusion, that it is a structure essentially different from any form of social life which has hitherto been known among progressive communities, and one which, if allowed to proceed in its normal development undisturbed by intervention from without, can only conduct to one issue,—an organized barbarism of the most relentless and formidable kind.”—p. 78.

Thus, it will be seen that no progress in civilization is possible in the direction in which slavery is tending, as regards the slave. Instead of the system growing milder, it is now more severe than ever, owing to the causes just stated. But what of the poor whites? We have seen that they are the necessary result of the system of labor at the South, and therefore, as long as that exists, the germs of a higher order of civilization cannot be sought in them. They will never become industrious and thrifty by the side of slave labor; nor intelligent and educated as the poorer classes at the North are, because in slave communities, population, being governed by laws of increase peculiar to itself, can never become dense, a prime necessity for the education of the masses of mankind. The population of Virginia, though the State was settled two centuries and a half ago, is, including the slave population, only *twenty-three* persons to the square mile, while in the free States of New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, settled more recently, and where the conditions of increase are less favorable, we find a population of *eighty-three* persons to the same area. In the former, population increases by dispersion; in the latter, by concentration.

Shall we, then, look for progress in Southern society, in the expectation that the slave-holders will voluntarily be induced to abandon the system, and thus, changing the whole productive energy of the country, make room for free labor and for all its accompanying elements of civilization? For them as slave-holders we cannot hope a different type of social order from that which has always existed amongst them. The elements which have wrought in the social system of the South to make it what we now find it, will, if uninterrupted, continue to produce the same results. If, however, the Slave Power should accept emancipation for the future, then we might expect a different state of things. Southern society would in a very short time be characterized by every advantage and excellence which we see in free communities. But will the South accept such a course for future action? Her condition is not analogous to that of the Northern States which abandoned the system. In these it had no deep root, and therefore could be broken up without in the main disturb-

ing the structure of society. Far otherwise, however, would it be in the South. There the system is firmly seated,—wrought into the very fibres of social organization, constituting from a third to one half of the population of the several States, and therefore even the most gradual process of decadence in its strength would occasion more or less disturbance, both in her industrial and in her social condition. The people of the South are not favorable to so large a number of slaves being set free amongst them. Besides, they love the system independently of its industrial basis. “It is not simply,” says Professor Cairnes, “as a productive instrument, that slavery is valued by its supporters. It is far rather for its social and political results,—as the means of upholding a form of society in which slave-holders are the sole depositaries of social prestige and political power, as the ‘corner-stone’ of an edifice of which they are the masters,—that the system is prized.” It has tinged their ethical code, and what was by the founders of the republic regarded as an evil in every respect, is now accepted as the only natural condition of the negro. Jefferson “trembled for his country when he reflected that God was just,” and declared that “the Almighty had no attribute which could take side with slave-owners,” should the slaves rise. But such morbid moral instincts as these words betray have been corrected by the benign and humane influence of slavery, and the views of Jefferson and his compeers are rejected as erroneous and unphilosophical. “The ideas entertained at the time of the formation of the old Constitution,” says Vice-President Stephens, “were that the enslavement of the African race was in violation of the laws of nature; that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally, and politically. Our new government is founded on exactly opposite ideas; its foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests, upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and moral condition. . . . To suppress slavery would be to throw back civilization two hundred years.” With such ideas current in the Southern mind, we should hardly expect that the Slave Power, if left to itself, would inaugurate a system of emancipation on any scale, whether gradual or rapid, and we therefore

cannot hope for any great improvement in slave-holding society. If it come, it will be by the force of events over which the Slave Power has little or no control. It must bend to the storm which it has raised over its own head. Already Missouri is moving into line, taking position morally, and socially, and pecuniarily, as she does geographically, by the side of free Illinois. Maryland seems likely to follow the noble example, and thus the movement for getting rid of slavery in the Border States will have gathered such momentum as to grind to dust some of Kentucky's fossil politicians, who are doing all they can to bind her to the Juggernaut-car of slavery. Let her remember Henry Clay's scheme for working free from the blighting system, and arise from her degradation, and be strong in all that makes a State great and noble, and across the beautiful Ohio send the glad shout of emancipation. Kentucky! we love thee for the ashes of thy matchless orator, statesman, philanthropist, patriot!

From love of the system as affording a peculiar social and political organization in every way agreeable and advantageous to those who own such labor, a chief aim of the Slave Power has been to protect itself against encroachments. Preservation has been the first law of its political action; and leading men in the South, who are best acquainted with the laws of slave institutions and slave society, have long since seen that, if slavery is hemmed in and not allowed to expand, it must soon cease to exist. As Judge Warner of Georgia says: "There is not a slave-holder but knows perfectly well that, whenever slavery is confined within certain specified limits, its future existence is doomed." Its economic necessity is expansion, and therefore, in view of an event so inexorable as that stated in this confession, the Slave Power has been led to act with great singleness of aim. From the time that such a result was clearly disclosed in the workings of slave labor, in connection with the love of the system, and that it was seen to be remunerative only under certain conditions, the Slave Power has entered into the politics of the country, and sought in every way to control its action. How successful it has been, we shall see in the sequel. Meantime, several things combined to hasten the expansion of slavery over new territories which

lay in its ambitious path. First, agricultural interests are not so firmly fixed as mechanical and manufacturing. Secondly, the tastes and feelings of the slave-holder are formed under a system which is calculated to secure anything but a tolerant spirit; and thus from being obeyed with absolute submission in the sphere where they rule, and seeing that slavery gives them a certain kind of superiority, springs the ambition for a large lease of power. Here, then, is the grand motive for extending the institution, because in this is concentrated a common and almost exclusive interest among slave-holders, so that they are held together for any political purpose by a single overmastering motive, — the expansion and preservation of a system, in order to give them a dominant influence in the policy of the country.

Notice, now, how their love of power was propitiated. As, from the nature of their industrial system, population could be increased to any considerable degree only by expansion, they aimed at this for two reasons: first, to augment their numerical strength in the lower house of Congress, because by a special provision of the Constitution three fifths of the slaves are reckoned in the basis of representation; and, secondly, in the upper house of Congress they had a yet greater advantage than the three-fifths rule; for there the representation of the States is equal, without regard to size or population. If, now, new Slave States could be rapidly multiplied, irrespective of the density of their population, they would be masters of the Senate, and thus could maintain their wonted rule. But even with such favorable circumstances on the side of the Slave Power, it was evident that the time was rapidly drawing nigh when the superior energy of free labor, of thrift, of intelligence, of a multiplicity of interests, must be more than a match for the South with her single interest, however completely organized or skilfully handled. Its policy has been, therefore, to divide the superior strength of the North, and to form such an alliance as would be most advantageous for itself. This Professor Cairnes finds in the relation of capital, which has always been advanced by the North, to the successful existence of slavery. It would be instructive to investigate how far this commercial interest has, in a political

aspect, gone with the South ; yet when we remember how the great city of New York and the shipping interest of New England, especially as engaged in the cotton trade, have steadily voted with rare exceptions, we are not to marvel at the statement, that through the capital of the North the South has exercised a controlling influence in the government. It was the timidity of capital, which cowered basely before the threat of disunion, that emboldened the South to enlarge her demands for her pet institution.

But one other fact, of which Professor Cairnes makes no mention, especially as existing within the last fifteen or twenty years, is deserving attention ; namely, the love of power which long exercise of it had created in the dominant political party of the country. In order to gratify this and to perpetuate its rule, alliance with the South was absolutely necessary. Here, however, we meet with a strange fact in the history of our politics. The South was of course proslavery. The North was, with rare exceptions, irrespective of political combinations, antislavery. The former would ally itself to any of the great political organizations of the land, provided a friendly pledge, as a *conditio sine qua non*, was stipulated for her peculiar institution. We do not assert that the terms of such a bargain were definitely drawn up, or could have been easily traced, but such was the actual state of the case ; so that the strange fact is, that what was once a question on which the North had scarcely any difference of views, has now divided the Northern States into two great factions, the one antislavery, the other defending slavery, often on Scriptural grounds. In this division of the North lay the strength of the South. She, from her peculiar interest, was not more anxious to gain for its friend an ally at the North, than a dominant organization there, grown old in the exercise of power, and tracing its origin to Jefferson, whose name, honored by a Jackson and a Silas Wright, was a tower of strength, was to perpetuate its rule by binding the South to itself in political action. Truth demands that it be said, a party there was, whose love of power was stronger than that for its past record on the vexed question of slavery. With this party a coalition was formed, and the South maintained its controlling influence in the govern-

ment, and had so far subsidized this new ally to her demands as not to tolerate the least hesitancy in granting all she claimed for slavery.*

Slavery, once established in the country, created, as we have seen, a peculiar social organization, in which the slave-holders are an aristocratic oligarchy. The influence of this oligarchy developed itself in the politics of the land, as well as in the local politics of the South. It had ample motive to seek power; for thus it could throw about its system the indirect, if not the direct, force of the federal government, in granting it free expansion over the unoccupied territories. Professor Cairnes traces in the seventh chapter of his book, with a vigorous pen, the stages of the career of the Slave Power. We need not pause on these. They are fresh, many of them, in the memory of the American people. But no candid mind, we think, can fail to see that the South, from the time that Missouri was admitted into the Union to the present, has had a definite aim in view, and that was to maintain her supremacy in the councils of the nation. The controversy which the admission of Missouri occasioned was angry and protracted. At length, by a compromise familiar to all, both for the storm which it served in the hands of patriots to allay, and also for the storm which it served in the hands of ruthless men to gather over the nation, the State was admitted into the Union with a slave constitution. This, from the central position of Missouri in the heart of the great Mississippi Valley, was substantially a victory for the South. Next came the annexation of Texas, under the leading of Mr. Calhoun, who to our Minister at the Court of Louis Philippe, Mr. King, declared it to be for the purpose of strengthening the institution of slavery. We all know the train of events which that drew in its path, — the war with Mexico, the acquisition of vast areas of territory, and the reopening of the slavery controversy in 1850, when California was admitted into the Union. From 1820 to 1850 the equilibrium between the Slave States and the Free States had been

* The reader is referred to the *Congressional Globe* for 1858 - 59, for a debate between the late Judge Douglas and Southern Senators, as to the meaning of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. With this compare the proceedings of the Charleston Convention.

preserved; but by the acquisition of California to the Free States the balance was disturbed. This was a critical time to the fortunes of the Slave Power. That the South, therefore, should seek to retrieve its lost power was most natural, and the hope of doing this was excited by the fact that the territory lying contiguous to the western boundary of Missouri was suitable for slave labor. But a difficulty almost insurmountable interposed, namely, the territory now composing the State of Kansas, on which the Slave Power had its eye, was covered by the Missouri restriction. That had more than ordinary legislative sacredness, both from the circumstances out of which it grew, and also because it was a compromise. But the Slave Power was inexorable in its demand, and the work of Clay and his compeers must, therefore, yield to the purposes of the South. Little did the authors of that perfidy think of the storm they were gathering upon the nation, so that to-day we are settling at the point of the bayonet what in the Congress of the United States was begun by throwing open the territories to the ingress of slavery. When, however, in the settlement of Kansas, the superior energy of the Free States had defeated the aims of the South, though backed by the most stupendous frauds and by the connivance of the general government,* the Slave Power demanded of the North protection in the Territories for slave property under the Constitution, — a doctrine which originated with Mr. Calhoun, and which, at the time he brought it forth, was denounced by leading statesmen in the country, North and South.†

The controversy which arose in the settlement of Kansas was important, not merely in regard to the immediate interest at stake, but as indicating the *animus* of the South in pursuing its settled purpose. It was unscrupulous in the means it employed. It would secure a slave State at any price, and, failing of this, would, like Samson, pull down upon its head the government under which it has grown to its present proportions, and which for nearly a half-century it chiefly controlled. And the issue finally was presented, either to surrender the government outright to the Slave Power, or to check its de-

* R. J. Walker, in the number of the Continental Monthly for December, 1862.

† Benton's Thirty Years in the United States Senate, Vol. II. pp. 713, 730, 731.

mands at the point of the bayonet. The question, therefore, is pertinent, What shall we expect of the Slave Power in the future, should it succeed in gaining independence? Would it be the same in its essential constitution, or would it be modified by being an independent nation? This is a question of prime moment, both to this country and to the civilized world. Seeking an answer in the light of developments within the past quarter of a century, we have nothing to hope, but everything to fear. Neither the philanthropist, nor the moralist, nor the public economist, can look upon an independent slave empire with feelings of composure. They all see in it, as the grand aim, a purpose to perpetuate the system of human bondage, as it exists in the South. Resting on the same economic laws, it will have the same moral, social, and political bearings. It will in the future, as in the past, demand room for expansion. Its eye will survey with covetous look the West Indies, Mexico, Central America; and yet, as Professor Cairnes tells us, writers who profess to speak for England look with favor upon the efforts of the South for independence, as if *that* were its grand aim, and not the extension of slave institutions. We may view, says our author, its independence under these three conditions:—First, as limited to the Slave States now in revolt. But the South would never submit to such conditions; for it would be the very thing Judge Warner declared slavery could not abide. Or, secondly, having liberty of colonizing the unsettled Territories equally with the North. And here we should have a repetition of the Kansas struggle. The energetic North could anticipate, or more than match, any effort of the South; and would the Slave Power submit to see a cordon of free States planted across her Western boundary, and, as Mr. Spencer says, view the “painful process of strangulation,” without an effort to avert so certain a doom? Or, thirdly, that there should be an equal division of the Territories. This latter condition alone would satisfy the South. It is argued, therefore, that, the area of slavery being definitively settled, “hemmed in,” slavery would be doomed to ultimate extinction. To this view Professor Cairnes states two points worthy of consideration. First, that the country so “hemmed in” is a territory

nearly as large as Europe, and therefore would of itself afford sufficient room for the development of a most powerful empire ; and, secondly, that on the strength of such a result the South might, in some unforeseen international complication of other nations, realize her ambitious projects of establishing her power over Mexico, Central America, and the West Indies. With this, too, would be connected the reopening of the African slave-trade. The audacity of this aim must not blind our eyes to it ; for the Slave Power is not moderate in its aims. It is the most completely organized political unit the world has ever seen. It is not merely independence of the Union which the South seeks, but independence of all restraint in accomplishing a cherished purpose. It is, therefore, in view of a result so momentous, and affecting so vitally the interests of civilization, that Professor Cairnes maintains that the only interference by European nations in the present struggle which could be justified, would be on the side of the North. If, in regard to questions of signal moment, it has been considered just by leading statesmen of Europe to interfere with the policy of nations, as in the case of Russia, and in settling the vexed and intricate question of the "balance of power," it would certainly be in accordance with national morality and international right to restrain a power, which has for its central dogma and purpose the subjugation to slavery of an unfortunate race.

Professor Cairnes has a singular plan by which he would bring the American controversy to a close. He would confine the Southern Confederacy within the territory south of the Border States, and east of the Mississippi, and permit the States composing it to go off, and thus slavery would be left to the sure process of decay. Absorption of the remaining Slave States by the North would be possible without any detriment to free institutions and free society. It is confessed that such a plan is possible only on the supposition that the national government should be successful in defeating the Confederate armies, and actually occupying the Slave States to be absorbed. But the question will suggest itself, If we can so far conquer the Confederacy, what would hinder an entire overthrow of the rebellion ? Neither would the South surrender the terri-

tory beyond the Mississippi, unless essentially crippled in her strength, and this would only furnish a reason why the government should insist upon unconditional and absolute submission to its authority.

The difficulty of this plan consists in the fact, that it makes the government a willing party to the doctrine of secession. If the government be compelled by an inflexible law of necessity to abandon the effort at restoring its rightful authority, it must make the best of the condition forced upon it ; but for the government voluntarily to give its countenance to secession, by admitting its lawfulness, — not, however, in the same way in which revolution is lawful, but as a reserved right of the States, — would be treason against itself. The settlement may involve many more sacrifices and difficulties than we have yet imagined, and perhaps may compel the employment of means such as would be considered extra-constitutional by all men ; but the doctrine of secession is so monstrous as not to be tolerated on any ground. Yet, on the supposition that the government has the physical power to force the South into submission to its authority, it is maintained that this would be unjustifiable for two reasons. First, it would be a violation of international morality for the North to subject some millions of people to its government and laws, when they utterly detest such a relationship ; and, secondly, in the event of such a course, it is manifest that free institutions and free government must be sacrificed for a time, at least, to military power. For how would it be possible to carry on the functions of a free government, which rests ultimately for its existence upon the voluntary acts of its citizens, when they are opposed to it ? Who, in this mass of subjugated men, would there be, either to accept offices of civil trust, or to confer upon others the right to rule ?

These are serious difficulties, and are not to be set aside without careful consideration. No nation is warranted in violating great principles of morality for the sake of mere national success. We could scarcely defend the right of the North to impose upon the South its government and laws, if these two sections were nearly equal in civilization. International morality demands that such an arbitrary course be abandoned.

But if the two be widely separate as to the degree of social improvement, it would on the broadest principles of morality be justifiable to subject the South to such dominion. "To suppose," says J. Stuart Mill, "that the same international customs, and the same rules of international morality, can obtain between one civilized nation and another, and between civilized nations and barbarians, is a grave error, and one which no statesman can fall into, however it may be with those who, from a safe and irresponsible position, criticise statesmen." As between the North and the South in respect to their forms of civilization, we would not classify the latter as barbarous, yet we are free to confess that, on the assumption that it is founded on the grand fundamental idea which Mr. Stephens lays down, namely, the enslavement of the African to the will of the white man, it contains within itself the same principles which prevail in the kingdom of Dahomey; and it has this signal infelicity of doing the very thing to others which it refuses to have done to itself. We are aware that this is a most difficult question to settle: how far to go, and where the lines are to be drawn, involves nice discrimination. What is clear is, that international morality allows the subjugation of one nation to the will of another, when such a course will in the main advance the true ends of man. The question is, Would the Southern Confederacy, with its assumptions and aims, be subject to such a rule?

As regards the other difficulty, namely, the overthrow of representative institutions, that resolves itself into the question whether a great representative government like ours should be sacrificed to a dangerous conspiracy. Better rule the South as a dependency for a generation, than to yield the main principle at issue. It may be replied, that this would be a violation of the Constitution, and therefore a virtual overthrow of the government. We ought, however, to make a distinction between the Constitution as a law, or rule of action, and the Constitution as the exponent of certain great principles of free government. We can conceive the exigency when, to save the government, extra-constitutional methods must be resorted to, just as the necessity of martial law for a time overrides the ordinary methods of civil procedure. The employment of

armies in order to execute the laws of the land is a step beyond the common way of executing law ; for it will hardly be claimed that the army in this struggle is nothing more than a *posse comitatus*. We must be willing, therefore, to advance to the very outermost limit of power in a contest like the present, and to plant ourselves on the principle that whole masses of men, like individuals who violate law, may be compelled to forego the rights which belong to them as law-abiding citizens. The forfeiture of representative government at the South, whether voluntary or compulsory, would be looked upon as a penalty for crime on a most stupendous scale, and thus would deter a repetition of the same in the future. The government, therefore, is struggling, not for conquest, nor for superiority over the South, but for its own existence ; and in this the people, true to their instincts, and alive to the momentous consequences of the issue, are resolved to make every sacrifice in upholding the national authority. They believe that no factious minority has a right to imperil or overthrow a benign government, which was formed for the good of the whole people. They rest upon the immovable truth, that government has a right to be. They brush away the sophistries of bad men, and assert that self-preservation against encroachments which are ruinous to national life is a principle too plain for debate ; and they can see nothing of hope for our country except in the success of our arms in subjugating a rebellious population. They insist upon one constitution, one government, for these United States ; and whatever of prosperity and of national grandeur is possible in the future, is inseparable from the unity of these States and the perpetuity of our government. These, in less than a century, have conducted us to unequalled strength and glory ; and if our generation has the virtue and the patriotism of that which inaugurated our national life, we may yet surmount the difficulties which lie in our path. Government will be supreme, law will be respected, and the rights of man vindicated. We shall be both the possessors and the defenders of "Liberty and Union, one and inseparable."